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PP RUEHROV
DE RUEHJM #0316 0550919
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
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FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4168
INFO RUEHXK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 000316

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA; NSC FOR SHAPIRO/PASCUAL;
JOINT STAFF FOR LTG SELVA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/23/2019

TAGS: PREL PBTS KWBG KPAL IS

SUBJECT: ISRAEL RESTRICTS ACCESS TO "SEAM ZONE" ALONG
SEPARATION BARRIER IN JERUSALEM, WEST BANK

REF: 07 JERUSALEM 2555

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶11. (SBU) Summary. A series of IDF closure orders will restrict access for West Bank Palestinians to the "seam zone" between the separation barrier and the green line. The January 5 orders primarily impact lands adjacent to completed sections of the barrier in the central and southern West Bank and near Jerusalem. Palestinians who live inside these areas of the "seam zone" or whose agricultural lands are there will be required to obtain a permit from the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT). End Summary.

Closure Orders Issued

¶12. (C) A series of closure orders issued by the IDF on January 5 and scheduled to take effect February 20 will restrict access for West Bank Palestinians to the "seam zone" between the separation barrier and the green line (or, in the case of Jerusalem, the Israeli-defined municipal boundaries). UN OCHA provided Poloff with five orders (09/01/S through 09/07/S, excluding 09/04/S and 09/05/S) signed by West Bank IDF Commander MG Gadi Shamni. OCHA did not have orders 09/04/S and 09/05/S, and said some of the local COGAT offices had refused to provide copies of the orders. (Post will email copies to NEA/IPA and Embassy Tel Aviv.) Similar closure orders have been in effect and periodically renewed since October 2, 2003, in the northern West Bank.

¶13. (SBU) The orders primarily impact lands adjacent to completed sections of the barrier in the central and southern West Bank and near Jerusalem. The orders limit entry to designated seam zone to Israeli citizens and permanent residents (i.e., East Jerusalem residents with Israeli IDs) and to permit holders. West Bank Palestinians aged 16 and older must obtain a permit and prove "constant residence" in the seam zone. (The orders do not define the term "constant residence.") OCHA and B'tselem contacts told Poloff they do not know the total land area to which access is restricted, nor the number of Palestinians affected.

WALLES